



## FACT SHEET FOR SPOTTED GRUNTER

<b>Scientific Name:</b>	<b><i>Pomadasys commersonii</i></b>
<b>Common Names:</b>	<b>Spotted Grunter or Tiger</b>
<b>Family:</b>	<b>Haemulidae</b>
<b>Size:</b>	<b>Can grow up to 85 cm and 9.5 kg</b>

### **Identification Features:**

Spotted Grunters are very oblong compressed fish. They have a long, sloping forehead and a pointed snout. They are a lovely shiny, bright silver colour overall. The lower part of the fish is paler in colour. The top half of the fish, except for the snout, is covered in rows of small, dark brown spots; the fins are translucent. Although some individuals reach 85cm most only grow to about 40 cm on average (size of a female at maturity). Grunter have pharyngeal teeth in the gullet and make a very loud grunting noise when irritated. This noise is often heard by fishermen when removing the fish from the water hence the name grunter. The grunting is can also be heard underwater by divers; it is quite loud and distinct.

### **Distribution:**

This species can be found in the Indian Ocean, from India all the way down to the southern Cape.

### **Habitat:**

Adults of this species inhabit estuaries and coastal waters over soft sediments. It can tolerate fresh water. Tagging results suggest that adult Spotted Grunters are fairly resident in the region of estuary mouths.

### **Diet:**

The Spotted Grunter forces jets of water through the mouth (using the pumping action of its gill chambers 'in reverse') to 'blow' prey such as worms, crabs, mud prawns and cracker shrimp from their burrows in the muddy seabed and small bivalves are also often eaten.

### **Reproduction:**

Spawning occurs in the shallow coastal waters during late winter and post-spawning adults may enter estuaries for feeding purposes. The newly hatched fry enter estuaries.

50% maturity: **Males 33 cm and females 39 cm**  
Maximum age: **15 years**  
Reproductive style: **Gonochoristic (does not change sex)**  
Age at sexual maturity: **Males 2.5 years and females 3 years**

### **Capture:**

This fish is not considered to be of commercial importance, irregular catches are trawled off East London and Port Elizabeth. This is an exceptionally great tasting table fish, and is much sought after by both anglers and spear fishermen. Most catches are landed along sandy beaches or in estuaries, particularly St. Lucia Estuary which is well known for its summer grunter run.

SA Angling Record: **9.5 kg**  
SA Spear fishing Record: **7.8 kg**

### **Regulations:**

Category: **Recreational List**  
Bag limit: **5 per person per day**  
Minimum size: **40 cm**  
Closed Season: **None**  
Other Regulations: **No Sale**  
SASSI List: **SASSI – BLACK LIST**

### **Research Priorities:**

Stock assessments are the current research priorities. The partial dependence on estuaries may make the Spotted Grunter more vulnerable than most other Haemulidae, as siltation, pollution and large scale dredging degrades these delicate ecosystems.

### **Management Considerations:**

More estuarine protected areas are required along the SA coast to ensure the effective conservation of the Spotted Grunter and other estuarine dependent species.

### **UNEVALUATED**

